TO A YOUNG GIRL

stars' unternished gold glooms in the meshes of thy bair. realy has of April's bine fives in the

heavenly has of April's bine lives in thy wondering eyes, lips which him to crimson the pale clouds that finch the shine of the finch the shine of the present thine own, and lingered lightly on thy cheeks so fair; were of passion on the heart hath sobbed in sensions sighs, hath ambition brought to the smooth here one touch of one, gods, with gifts supernal and supreme, have dowered thes.

th. purity and beauty thine, a precious legacy.

-Daniel E. O'Sullivan in Southern Bivonac

## THE GHOST.

My rather's farm was fully eleven miles, over a lonely and deserted road, from the little town of B-, and almost midway between the two points above lay the old Sharp farm, desolate and run to weeds, simply because the owner, for reasons hereafter to be given, was forced to content himself from year to year with the grazing it afforded his cattle and the few meager loads of hay saved from the neglected meadows.

The former proprietor, old Jacob Sharp, or Lame Jake, as he was more frequently called by reason of an unfortu-nate physical deformity, known to the doctors, I believe, as equino-varus, and commonly as clubfoot, had taken a notion a few years before to hang himself to a rafter in the old barn, and by that little act had completely ruined the rep-utation of one of the best and most fertile holdings in the country.

From whatever source originated, weird and uncanny stories soon began to circulate respecting the old homestead, the purport of which were that poor old Lame Jake, who had been so impatient to get out of the world, was now equally anxious to get back, but having foolishly disposed of his carnal covering to gratify the whim of an idle moment, he was now compelled in revisiting thus the glimpses of the moon, to restrict himself to such hours and places as the native modesty of any proper minded ghost would be most apt to suggest.

Many and marvelous were the legends which the "auld slashers" of the country, as the Great Antiquary would call them, were in the habit of relating to such juvenile and feminine ears as were most readily captivated thereby; and many and many a night have I seen my sister and younger brothers go to bed with eves like saucers after an evening's seance with one of these raconteurs.

But, as the New Light of Asia has it,

that is another story.

One tenant of the place had fifty bushels of wheat carefully winnowed one night, old Jake being distinctly seen by a member of the family, whom the noise of the mill had aroused, standing in the time honored white nightgown and surrounded by a bluish halo, industrionsly turning the crank; but while he was congratulating himself that these visitations promised to be of a Brownie rather than of a Goblin character the next night, outrageous to relate, the winnowed wheat was just as carefully mixed with an equal quantity of rye from another bin, the scandalous proceedings being celebrated with flashings of light, the most outlandish racket and

liscordant peals of unearthly laughter.
These financial losses and annoyances, still have been struggled against for some time had not his ghostship taken 58 into his pneumatic head to begin a series of domiciliary visits threatening more directly the unfortunate man's

personal peace and welfare.

A bright glare, emanating from some particular room, would convey to the startled inmates the idea that the house was in flames; and a rush being made thither the light would disappear in an instant, to the accompaniment of loud groans and laughter, rattling of furniture and pattering of ghostly footsteps down the hallways.

Frequently the farmer during sleep, usually when most worried, would find himself suddenly and disgracefully fired out of bed by some invisible agency; windows and crockery were smashed, bells rung at midnight, and on one occasion his wife had the wits nearly frightened out of her by finding her lord sleeping one morning by her side, his hands folded on his breast and two pennies placed in orthodox fashion over his eyes,

These happenings, the reader will easily conceive, had the effect of limiting his occupancy of the Sharp messuage strictly to the period of his lease, and some three or four others who succeeded him made equally short stays.

Others complained most of the trouble they had with their cattle. Horses securely stalled began about midnight to raise a most terrific uproar, and if not promptly liberated would invariably thrash down the stable door and be found next morning huddled together to the farthest corner of the pasture. Frequently one would be found bearing the marks of the saddle and other evidences of a severe night journey, although in such instances, in justice to old Jake, the fact that one of the boys was courting a squire's daughter in a neighboring county may have borne some relation to the phenomenon.

Weird lights burning through the chinks of the barn and about the premises were so common to the neighbors that when the boys and girls happened to be belated at a dance, a husking or an apple paring they told their parents they came home by the light of old Sharp's lantern.

I am not going in this age of divided

put myself on record as the man that naw Jake Sharp's ghost; but what I did see and hear the night I slept in that old barn-well, I'm going to tell you

I had been to B- and was returns somewhat late. The night was dark and starless, and the faint flashes of lightning which began in the west kept increasing in frequency and brilliancy behind me till, just as the old Sharp gables loomed up from the blackness before me, the storm I had been appre-

hending burst spon me like the opening of a waterspout.

Never before had I seen such a downfall. The rain descended in one solid sheet, and the earth fairly shook with the continuous roll of the thunder. The lightning was fierce and vivid.

Under the circumstances there was nothing to do but to take shelter, for a time at least, in the old barn; and you can easily imagine with what a creepy sensation I heard the rickety doors creak on their rusty hinges as I swung them open and got my team as quickly as possible under the leaky cover.

Striking a match just to get my bear-ings, I unbitted the horses and supplied them with hay, of which there was a quantity in one of the mows; and then lighting my pipe, that incomparable solace of the solitary, I began to take stock of my surroundings.

The storm showing no sign of abatement, the thunder crashes following each other in quick succession, and the lightning playing vividly through the chinks and broken shingles, I began with as much stoicism as I could assume making preparations for my present

Selecting a dry spot in the haymow, I removed some of my wet outer gar-ments, and with the aid of horse blankets succeeded in improvising a tolerable bed; but not, I assure you, with the remotest idea of sleep.

Nevertheless, in an hour or so, the thunder and lightning having almost died away, although the rain still came down in torrents; worn out with fatigue and soothed by the odor of the hay, I fell into a deep and quiet slumber.

How long I slept I know not, but I was suddenly wakened by the snorting and stamping of the horses, and starting np, became immediately conscious of a faint bluish light floating in the air directly over the seat I had so lately occu-

It resembled no other light I had ever seen, but seemed to be simply a ball of bluish or amethyst colored fire, which circled about through the air with a queer undulating movement. It imparted to me as I looked at it a strange feeling of dizziness and nausea.

While I sat staring, fascinated by the mysterious light, I was horrified to hear a long, low groan, coming seemingly from the body of the wagon, followed almost instantly by the sound of my own name, repeated as distinctly as I had ever beard it in my life-"Joe! Joe!"

With the cold perspiration beginning to break from every pore I sprang to my feet, and as I did so the light floated slowly up to the rafters and disappeared. while a low, rattling laugh echoed through the darkness.

All doubts as to the truth of the stories I had heard about the haunted barn were now pretty fully dismissed. I felt that

I was fairly in for it. By the feeble glare of my matches, which only seemed to intensify the dark ess, I strove to penetrate the wall of blackness about me, but not a thing

My heart was chilled, my blood frozen in my veins, and I was only prevented from dashing open the doors and escaping into the more friendly darkness without by the simple fact that terror-shall I say it?—had rendered me in-

capable of motion. Do not think it was imagination. There could be no imagination about a sound so distinct. The low, wailing groan, like that of a man in his death agony, rose slowly on the stillness again, followed as before by the harsh, devilish, cackling laugh and the words, "Joe!" "Joe!" repeated, as I imagined

in my horror, by my own father's voice. This time the light did not appear, but a new terror had been added to the scene. I fancied I heard a creaking sound, and straining my ear till my brain seemed to crack made out, as I imagined, quite distinctly the sound of footsteps creeping toward me across the bare planking of the floor.

I am honest enough to confess that in striking another match my hands shook like those of a man with the paley. Again everything was quiet. Nothing visible except the horses, with heads thrown back, cowering against each

I was relieved by the reflection that no material danger at least threatened me, but a new trouble now overtook me. I spilled my matches on the wet hay.

I sat down now in despair, and as I leaned my face upon my hand I could feel the arteries in my temples throbbing like trip hammers. I felt that I could never live through the remainder of that awful night and preserve my

As I pressed my hands upon my throbbing temples and vainly strove to mitigate with reason the blind violence of my terror, I suddenly uttered a wildery of horror as a long, wet, clammy arm, or what I took for one in the darkness, was thrown tightly around my neck with a

cold clasp that nearly strangled me. As I struggled desperately, with a sickening sense of horror, to release my-self from the slimy coils of what I thought must be some gigantic reptile, that same low, mocking, devilish laugh came cackling through the darkness

The plunging of the horses, the fiendish laughter, groams and calling of "Joe! Joe! grew louder and more demoniac, till, maddened with horror, by a super-human effort I flung the infernal thing, whatever it was, from me, heard it strike with the proverbial duli thud against the side of the barn, and forgetting horses, storm, darkness, distance and everything else. I rushed from the infernal place, and with hair erect and

and in company with my father and younger brother, returned to the scene of my late horrible experiences, and the investigations we there made in reference to the noises and other phenomena will I am afraid, only disgust those imaginative minds which are always on the alert for startling denouements.

The gnawing sounds we found had been produced by the chafing of the wagon hub against a loose board in the haymow, and every time the animals reached forward after their fodder the movement carried a rusty, guttural, scraping of the turntable, which simulated the sound, "Joe, Joe," with sufficient nearness to mislead a cooler head than mine was just at that time.

The demoniac laughter which had so horrified me was of equally absurd origin, being simply the rattling and clat-tering of a thin, loose clapboard high up in the gable whenever a gust stronger than usual struck it. For the light I could find no explanation other than the only possible fact that it was simply a phosphorescent exhalation from a little swamp near by, one of those luminous methylic vapors, variously known as will-o'-the-wisp, Jack-o'-lantern, ignis

The place was infested with rats, and it was doubtless their scurrying back and forth over the floor which sounded so much like stealthy footsteps either that or the falling of the large rain-drops which found their way through the leaky roof.

There too lay the reptile which had so nearly strengled me—a long, soft strip of the inner bark of one of the cedar rafters, which, saturated by the rain, had fallen across the back of my neck as I stooped forward, and you can readily appreciate the sensation such a thing, unexpected and in total darkness, would be apt to produce.

While we were making these discoveries and remarking how a little daylight and good common sense will knock the props from under the best ghost story ever gotten up, we were all startled by a sudden rat-tat-tat on the barn door.

My father hastily unfastened it, expecting of course, to meet one of the neighbors, or possibly a strolling tramp, and I noticed a queer expression come over his face. There was not a soul

He had hardly closed the door, however, when the sharp rat-tat-tat was repeated, this time considerably prolonged. Again the door was opened quickly, and again not a soul was in sight.

There was a little door in the rear of the barn, and, leaving my father and brother looking at one another in a somewhat funny manner, I quietly unfastened this, and as the knocking had recommenced, slipped quickly around outside to the front of the barn, only to see a large redheaded woodpecker diligently tapping away on the door in search of his breakfast.

We got away from that place with all the expedition possible, and ever since my skepticism in reference to the vivid and ornate stories of a similar character, which we so frequently hear, is pretty radically confirmed by the simple remembrance of my own blood curdling experience that night—with the ghosts.

—J. R. Parke in Buffalo News.

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infernal place, and with hair erect and the clamor still ringing in my ears, fied, nor paused to breathe till I had covered the entire distance between there and home, where I arrived, haggard and bespattered, as the first streaks of the gray dawn, the white winged angels of a glad deliverance, came to meet me from the east.

Quickly I told my story, with every detail of touch and coloring possible, you may be sure, and having succeeded by the earnestness of my manner in suitably impressing the minds of the entire family, a circumstance, in view of the character the place already bore, not at all difficult, I hitched up another horse, and in company with my father and younger brother, returned to the scene of my late horrible experiences, and the investigations we there made in refer-

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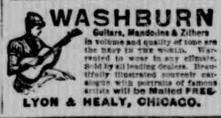
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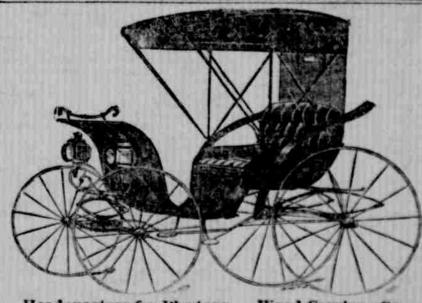
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